



NORTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR REMEDIAL ACTION PLANS

THUNDER BAY REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN (RAP) Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting

November 07, 2018 – 7 p.m.

Lakehead University
Advanced Technology and Academic Centre (ATAC 3004)
Thunder Bay, ON

INTRODUCTIONS/ATTENDANCE

F. Edgson welcomed everyone and asked all present (listed below) to introduce themselves.

- **Gary Davies** – Nature Conservancy of Canada
- **Frank Edgson** – Thunder Bay PAC Co-chair
- **Jean Hall-Armstrong** – Thunder Bay PAC Co-chair (meeting chair)
- **Amber Kivisto** – BioNorth Solutions
- **Reg Nelson** – LU – Geospatial Data Centre (GDC)
- **Samuel Pegg** – LU – RAP Office
- **Bruce Pritchard** – PAC Member
- **Troy Sampson** – Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU)
- **Rob Stewart** - LU – RAP Office
- **Dawn Talarico** – Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP)
- **Bruce Thacker** – Thunder Bay Field Naturalists (TBFN)
- **Gail Willis** – Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA)
- **Michelle Willows** – LU – Graduate Student
- **Nathan Wilson** – LU – Graduate Student
- **Will Vander Ploeg** – EcoSuperior

REVIEW OF MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2018

The minutes of September 12, 2018 were reviewed. No errors or omissions were noted.

Recreational Water Program

Troy Sampson, Thunder Bay District Health Unit

T. Sampson presented on the Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Recreational Water Program. Troy's presentation covered the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), the new Recreational Water Protocol (2018), the Operational Approaches for Recreational Water Guideline (2018), the sampling method for beaches, the Health Unit's approach to City beaches and their website. He also showed some of the more recent beach data as well as the advisory signs that are posted at City beaches. The complete presentation is available on www.infosuperior.com.

Frank Edgson asked if the city was using some form of fecal collection system. Troy mentioned that they had one device at Chippewa, but the cost of the machines was around \$10,000 so he did not believe there was a machine at Boulevard Lake. He added that Boulevard also had fewer bird droppings and overall waterfowl in the area compared to Chippewa.

Samuel asked if the Health Unit had received any feedback from the public on whether or not they understood the posted signs. Troy mentioned that when it was rolled out in 2017, they received a few phone calls. He said that some people didn't like the signage and wanted to know simply if they can go in the water or not. He added that there is risk with anything (although the risk of contracting an infection from swimming in area beaches is low) that even with a posted advisory some people still chose to swim there. He mentioned that, if people chose to swim despite an advisory, they should follow the tips provided by the Health Unit to prevent infection.

Frank Edgson asked what Troy might attribute the cleanliness of the beaches to in the last couple of years. Troy replied that the only thing they are able to note from the data is that not as many seagulls or geese have been observed in the area. He also noted that they do not see the level of pollution on the beaches and in the water that they have in years past.

Reg Nelson asked if there was any obstacle to publicly posting the results of the sampling. Reg mentioned that when you go to the Ontario Parks website they post the results and beach advisories on all of their beaches. Reg noted that Ontario Parks would also post the numbers. Troy replied that they were unlikely to do this as the data was being collected as a way to evaluate the permanently posted signage. He mentioned that they wouldn't want to post a 10% average where the public believes there is low risk and then have a bad season where there are a several days where the counts above the guidelines and the public sees that.

A question was asked whether or not they looked at the number of swimmers over the years. Troy mentioned that the number of bathers was taken into account when they were sampling, but there would be very few present based on the sampling times of Monday morning. He mentioned that it would be up to City lifeguards to monitor the bathers.

Rob asked if there was an increase in the number of beach advisories in Sandy Beach when it opened more publically compared to Chippewa's main beach. Troy noted that

when they sample, the waves action at Sandy Beach may influence the counts versus at Chippewa main beach. He also noted though that each beach is unique.

Frank asked if these standards were the same as the Blue Flag program. Troy mentioned that the Blue Flag program had relatively strict standards, but he was not aware of what their standards are.

Samuel asked if Troy has seen some of the approaches to beaches used in different Lake Superior communities. For example, he mentioned Minnesota Beaches (mnbeaches.org) that looks at the beaches holistically including other parameters such as water temperature, wave actions, etc. in their monitoring and public reporting. Troy mentioned that some other areas in the province do predictive monitoring where there are weather stations within the water providing real-time data. Troy mentioned that it is very expensive to run these systems and it would need to be operated by the City rather than the Health Unit.

Jean Hall-Armstrong asked why the Ontario government had taken so long to update the standards. Troy mentioned that in Manitoba was always 200, when Ontario was 100. He also noted that many of the historical advisories posted within Thunder Bay were posted when the counts were above 100 count threshold, but these advisories would have been below 200 counts.

Rob asked what would happen if they came across a blue-green algae bloom when they were out sampling. Troy mentioned that if they did, samples would be collected for further analysis and a special sign they would put up that notes that blue-green algae was observed. He also mentioned that they would probably issue a press release as well

DISCUSS NEW DATA AND GUIDELINES VERSUS DELISTING CRITERIA

Dr. Rob Stewart, Lakehead University

R. Stewart explained that the delisting criteria included a particular E. coli. standard but that it also had a number of management actions (i.e. identify primary sources of fecal contamination) because people, at the time, wanted to show additional efforts to tackling the problem. He noted that many of the structural actions have been undertaken. Rob noted that there were questions around how the PAC deals with next steps of updating the delisting criteria to reflect the new standard. Rob also noted that there was a new guideline where there was not to be a single sample exceedance of 400 counts per 100ml for E. coli. He wondered if this should also be included in the delisting criteria.

Rob noted that it would be up to the agencies to determine the next steps forward for the criteria, rather than the PAC. Frank wondered if it was still the role of the PAC to list management actions in a delisting criteria. Jean noted that the delisting criteria had used 20% because that seemed to be a reasonable compromise to natural occurrences and fluctuations in E. coli. Rob noted that the next steps for beaches then would be for the agencies to update the criteria to reflect the new changes. The question was asked if, using the data already collected, we would be meeting the new targets. Troy noted that the signage for 2019 would indicate that the averages over the past five years for all of the beaches were at or below the 20% target.

North Harbour Update

Frank Edgson

Frank noted that he attended the meeting of the North Harbour Working Group on October 29, 2018. He said there wasn't much progress at this point. He noted that there was a pretty aggressive target for having a sediment management option selected by December 2019. Frank noted that there were a number of other options that weren't considered with the Cole Engineering Report but the new Working Group would like to consider them using the same criteria. Dawn Talarico also mentioned that the Working Group would be filling in some of the additional data needed for each option such as the cost of fill material in an effort to better understand the different options proposed. Frank Edgson also mentioned that Alan Cheeseman had purchased the property and is on the committee. Frank noted that the next meeting of the North Harbour working group would be a teleconference set for in early 2019.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the PAC is tentatively scheduled for February 6, 2018 and will focus on fish habitat.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.